

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, February 28, 2013

10:00 – 11:30am

**Location: Operation Living Hope food shelf
(2201 Girard Ave N, Minneapolis)**



Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City Office food shelf
- Jared Walhowe – Minnesota Project
- Jessica Hering – Salvation Army NEED food shelf
- Laura Skubric – EFN
- Sophia Lenarz-Coy – EFN
- Rachel Henderson – Waite House food shelf
- Andrea Nettles – Waite House food shelf
- Jacob Schuster – Catholic Charities food shelf
- Olufemi Adisa – Good Works food shelf
- Jen Schultz – Little Kitchen food shelf
- Michelle Graves – CES food shelf
- Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer – MN FoodShare
- Annie Malone – Operation Living Hope food shelf
- Copper Harding – Little Kitchen food shelf
- Siri Simons – Minneapolis Health Department
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

Meeting Notes

Spotlight on the Operation Living Hope food shelf:

Annie Malone presented information on the organization's background and current operations. The Operation Living Hope food shelf is regularly open on Wednesday evenings but also provides emergency food shelf services throughout the week to about 700 North Minneapolis residents a month. The food shelf offers a client choice model. Operation Living Hope is one of 7 food shelves receiving technical assistance from the Minneapolis Health Department which includes a food shelf enhancement designed to make healthy food items more attractive and visible to clients. The food shelf now displays healthy food signage, has a recipe shelf of healthy ingredients and a corresponding recipe card, and highlights produce and other healthy items using baskets. **If you have any questions about their efforts to increase healthy foods, please contact Annie Malone at annie@olivinghope.org.** Thank you to Annie for hosting our meeting!

How to increase the visibility and attractiveness of healthy foods in your food shelf:

Would you like to increase the visibility and attractiveness of healthy food items in your food shelf? You can help direct clients toward healthy options, and create higher demand for these items, by arranging things more like a grocery store using the following simple suggestions:

- Look at your existing food shelf layout and identify areas for improvement
 - Are food items grouped into similar categories to make it easier for clients to “shop” the shelves?
 - Are healthy foods easily identified and visible as soon as clients walk in?
 - Are your shelves neatly organized with items brought to the front and labels facing out?
- Make a few simple changes to highlight healthy items and improve client experience
 - Arrange like items together on the shelves and label them so that everyone can easily find what they’re looking for. Use shelf labels to clearly identify what products should be placed where.
 - Place items in orderly rows and bring packages to the front of the shelving unit with their labels facing outward.
 - Use signage to help clients identify healthy food items, especially fresh produce that might be hidden behind a cooler/refrigerator door.
 - Use baskets and bins to attractively display healthy items in a visible location.
 - Create a recipe shelf that is stocked with all of the basic ingredients needed to make a healthy recipe. Include a recipe card for clients to take home.
- Download free signage (available at the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network project website, under the Resources section)
 - “Choose Healthy Food” poster
 - “Choose Me, I’m a Healthy Item” shelf tag
 - “Don’t Forget Fresh Produce” sign
 - “Food Category” shelf labels
 - Santa Fe Chicken Pilaf recipe card
- Food shelves that are interested in receiving technical assistance on how to enhance your food shelf should contact Kristen (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov). In addition to guidance on how to modify your food shelf layout, you will receive a complete set of free, full-size, laminated signage including posters, shelf labels, and recipe cards.

Communicating your need for healthy food donations

Communications materials: Spring is a busy time for food shelf fundraising – many of you will be participating in the March campaign or will be talking with donors and the general public about donating to your food shelf. Use this opportunity to promote healthy food donations and cash donations to purchase healthy foods.

The Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network has the following resources available for you to use (all materials can be downloaded for free on the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network project [website](#)):

- “Donate Healthy Foods” poster (posters were distributed to meeting participants; please contact Kristen if your food shelf would like to receive one to hang in your building)

- “How to Support Food Shelves” brochure (brochures were distributed to meeting participants; please contact Kristen if your food shelf would like to receive a stack to distribute)
- Healthy Donations letter template
- www.healthyfoodshelves.org website

Food shelves are encouraged to use these materials and add information about your particular location/donation hours. This can be done by creating a simple paper flyer to insert in the brochure or by creating mailing labels/stickers to affix to the back of the brochure.

Health department staff will continue to develop simple, easy-to-print/copy materials for food shelves to use to promote these common messages.

Plant an Extra Row campaign:

One of the Network’s priority issues is connecting food shelves with local sources of healthy food including community and backyard gardeners. Health department staff are working with Mod and Co (communications consultant) to launch a “Plant an Extra Row” campaign to encourage gardeners to plant extra produce this spring and donate to a food shelf in our Network later this summer. We’re working on developing written materials (key messages, newsletter and social media posts, flyers, brochures, website page) that you can use to promote this idea as well as outreach strategies to get the word out, especially among our main target audience – members of the Local Food Resource Hubs Network (700 members in 2012). We’ll also have incentives for gardeners to commit to participating including tote bags and free seed packets.

The following are ways to recruit gardeners to plant a row for your food shelf. Consider using the key messages and other written materials we develop (which will be available in early March) by:

- Coordinate volunteers to door knock in your food shelf’s neighborhood to pass out materials
- Work with other food shelves in your geographic zone to combine efforts
- Send a mailing to individual gardeners in your neighborhood using the written materials we develop
- Reach out to gardening groups and associations using the written materials we develop (through snail or e-mail)
- Integrate key messages, newsletter templates and social media posts into your food shelf’s newsletter and other communications outlets with existing donors

Food bank policies and practices related to healthy foods:

Many food shelves in the Network have expressed interest in working with EFN and Second Harvest Heartland to recommend policy and practice changes related to healthy foods. Existing programs including the food rescue program at Second Harvest are very helpful, however there are a number of issues that food shelves would like the chance to address. The group discussed challenges to healthy food donations and procurement including size and consistency (of availability) of mixed produce and bulk produce pallets/boxes, sharing produce pallets among food shelves, more labeling of healthy food options in online ordering systems, more healthy food options and fewer unhealthy options in online ordering systems, and an organizational commitment to sourcing healthy foods for partner food shelves. Health department staff will draft a letter to provide this feedback to food bank leadership and will share with the group to determine who is interested in attending a meeting to discuss further.